

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed September 11, 2003 has been received and the Examiner's comments carefully reviewed. Claims 1, 10, and 19 have been amended. Claims 23-25 have been added. No new subject matter has been added. Claims 2, 3, 18, and 20 have been cancelled. Claims 1, 4-17, 19, and 21-25 are currently pending. Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims are in condition for allowance.

It is noted that Applicant submitted a Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement on September 27, 2001. An initialed 1449 Form has not been received. Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to return a copy of the initialed 1449 Form with the next communication.

Double Patenting

Claims 1-14 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-14 of U.S. Patent No. 6,464,849 B1 to Say et al. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection, however, Applicants have amended independent claim 1 to incorporate objected-to claim 18 to advance this application to allowance. Applicants therefore request withdrawal of this rejection.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102

The Examiner rejected claims 1-4, 6-8, 15-17 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Kaneko et al. (U.S. Patent 5,503,728). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection, but have amended claim 1, and cancelled claims 2 and 3 to advance this application to allowance. Applicants reserve the right to pursue the original subject matter via a continuing application.

Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of objected-to claim 18 and intervening claim 2. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-4, 6-8, and 15-17 are patentable.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103

The Examiner rejected claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kaneko et al. (U.S. Patent 5,503,728) in view of Corbett III, et al. (U.S. Patent 5,515,848). The Examiner also rejected claims 9-14 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kaneko et al. (U.S. Patent 5,503,728) in view of Gregg et al. (U.S. Patent 5,264,104). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Each of claims 5 and 9-14 depend upon claim 1. In view of the remarks regarding independent claim 1, further discussion regarding the independent patentability of dependent claims 5 and 9-14 is believed to be unnecessary. Applicants submit that dependent claims 5 and 9-14 are in condition for allowance.

The Examiner rejected claims 19, 21 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Douglas et al. (U.S. Patent 6,099,484) in view of Kaneko et al. (U.S. Patent 5,503,728) and further in view of Gregg et al. (U.S. Patent 5,264,104). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection, but have amended claim 19 to advance this case to allowance.

Claim 19 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of objected-to claim 20. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 19, 21, and 22.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner objected to claims 18, 20 and 21, but indicated that claims 18, 20 and 21 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form incorporating all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants thank the Examiner for this notification.

Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate objected-to claim 18 and intervening claim 2. Claim 19 has been amended to incorporate objected-to claim 20. New claim 23 incorporates the subject matter of objected-to claim 21 and base claim 19. New claims 24 and 25 correspond to original claims 20 and 22, and depend upon claim 23.

Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance.

SUMMARY

It is respectfully submitted that each of the presently pending claims (claims 1, 4-17, 19, and 21-25) is in condition for allowance and notification to that effect is requested. The Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' representative at the below-listed telephone number if it is believed that prosecution of this application may be assisted thereby.

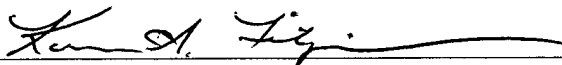
Although certain arguments regarding patentability are set forth herein, there may be other arguments and reasons why the claimed invention is patentably distinct. Applicants reserve the right to raise these arguments in the future.

Respectfully submitted,



MERCHANT & GOULD P.C.
P.O. Box 2903
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402-0903
(612) 332-5300

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Karen A. Fitzsimmons
Reg. No. 50,470
KAF:cjm